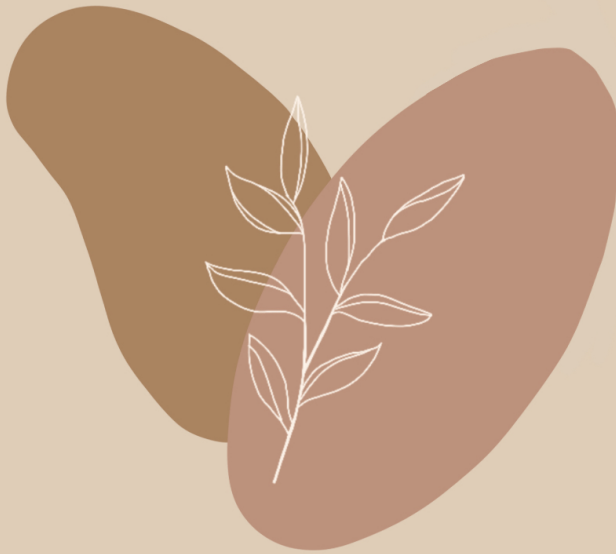


BLUEPRINT | JUNE - AUGUST 2020

SEASONAL GUIDE



— PENTECOST —

WEEK ONE | 7 JUNE 2020

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT



———— Ephesians 4:12-13 ————

...[the gifts of the Spirit are] to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

REFLECTIONS

When I first came to faith, I was overwhelmed by experiencing and seeing the incredible evidence of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit — speaking in tongues, healing, miracles, prophetic words, radical compassion, and incredible wisdom. I saw limbs grow, felt the tangible power of God, and saw people miraculously set free. It was amazing for me to discover that the God I have known as just being in Bible stories was actually moving today.

Despite this being an amazing time in my relationship with God, I think I actually misunderstood what I was seeing. Along with some friends, we began to chase the thrill of seeing the most spectacular thing God might do. Briefly we forgot that the gifts of God are not about the spectacle, they're about revealing his heart and nature. After all,

everything God does is to show who God is.

Ephesians 4:12–13 breaks down what these gifts are for into some very simple things.

1. Service of others — This is not about us. These gifts are meant to be used outside a Sunday service.
2. The growth of God's church — These gifts help the church become Christ's body here on earth.
3. To cause us to be unified — By seeing that we all possess different gifts, we discover our need for one another.
4. That we would attain the fullness of Christ — That we would be more like Jesus, who worked in the power of God's Spirit, too.

And all of these things are so that Jesus' name would be lifted

REFLECTIONS

up, that the world and its people would be healed and restored from sin, brokenness, sickness, and decay.

As we head into a world where Covid-19 threatens people's work, relationships and survival, it is crucial that we have something

more to offer than human solutions. We need the power of God, and we need the gifts that he gives to be a part of the solutions our world is crying out for.

— *Scottie Reeve*

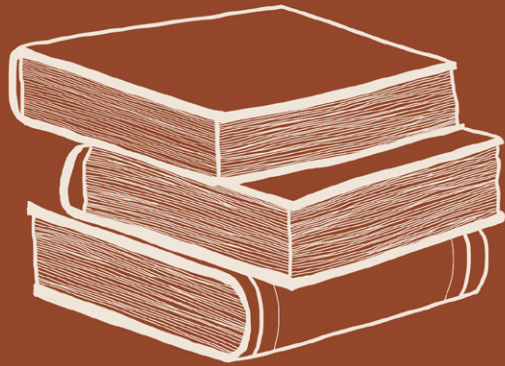
QUESTIONS

01 Have you heard of the Gifts of the Spirit before? What does this mean to you?

02 What kind of experiences — good or bad — do you bring to this journey of learning about the Gifts of the Spirit?

03 What is something you'd like God to help you understand over these next few weeks?

WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE



— 1 Corinthians 12:1,7-8 —

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit ...The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. To some people the Spirit gives a message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge.

A definition: This is being able to hear God speak specific details about a person or a situation.

REFLECTIONS

A highlight of my teenage years was going to Nelson on a Friday night to go to a ‘Charismatic service’. At one stage, the priest would call out an ailment, someone responded to it and then people would pray for the person. I was in awe of how God would work and rejoiced when the person exclaimed with joy that they were healed. I never wanted to pray for words of knowledge though, as I didn’t have the courage and it felt too vulnerable.

Today, when I receive a word of knowledge for physical healing, it actually comes as the affected part of the intended recipient hurting in my body. The first time I took the communion in a church service, just before I came up the front, I got this shooting pain in a tooth. As it came on so suddenly, after my first panicked thought, I realised it wasn’t my pain.

As I invited everyone to come and receive the bread and wine, I also invited whoever had the toothache to receive prayer. The person who responded was in church for the first time and had been asking God for a sign that He was real. God answered this person’s cry of the heart, but also added real strength to my faith.

The most common way I receive words of knowledge is when someone comes for prayer. I will often start praying — not really sure what I am going to say — and then somehow I just know something about the person’s situation. Sometimes I will stop and ask, “Is this going on for you?” And after dialogue, I pray specifically for that.

Other times, I have an understanding that I don’t need to say anything, as God is helping direct my prayers. Often the

REFLECTIONS

person will say afterwards, “That prayer was so spot on, how did you know?” I didn’t, but the Holy Spirit knows.

— *Lynley Webster*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the gift of Words of Knowledge something you have seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift brought healing to people?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

WEEK THREE | 21 JUNE 2020

HEALING AND THE MIRACULOUS



— 1 Corinthians 12:9-10 —

To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. To others he gives the power to do miracles...

A definition: This gift is the ability to pray for people and see physical restoration of their bodies and minds.

REFLECTIONS

The first time I experienced the gift of healing, I was 17. Part-way through a church service I noticed I had a headache. For some reason, I had a sense that this headache wasn't normal; I sensed the Holy Spirit speaking through it.

I remembered at my childhood church there were a couple of people who would sometimes get up the front and say that they had a word for healing. I began to wonder if my headache belonged to someone else. I went up to the front of the room and did what I'd seen other people doing before. I asked, "Does anyone here have a headache? I think God wants to heal it."

A young woman responded. It was the first time she had been to church and she had been suffering from chronic migraines for a long time. We laid hands

on her and we prayed, and she was healed. This encounter with God's love and care for her resulted in her deciding to follow Jesus that night.

This gift has continued to develop over time. Last year, a good friend and I were at an event where a band weren't able to play because their drummer was suffering crippling pain from Chron's disease. We laid hands on him, and immediately the pain went away. What was most amazing to the guy was not just that he was healed, but the realisation of how much God really loves him. In healing, I often find that people are more amazed by God's love than they are by the miracle. I think that's how it's supposed to be.

Healing prayer doesn't always work — even Jesus had to pray more than once sometimes.

REFLECTIONS

But I also know that when I've been faithful to it, many people have walked into new

freedom physically, emotionally and spiritually.

— *Scottie Reeve*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the gift of Healing something you have seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift brought healing to people?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

————— Luke 24:13-35 —————

To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages.

A definition: This gift is the ability to speak in heavenly languages that build up and strengthen the Church. Some people also have the ability to understand and interpret the words spoken.



REFLECTIONS

I had been struggling for a few years with my mental health when a friend prayed for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When they prayed, I felt this urge to speak in another language. I was afraid, but my friend encouraged me that if I felt like speaking anything, I should just speak it out!

I opened my mouth, and out flowed a language that my spirit knew but my ears didn't. It felt like I was connecting with God at a new and deep level. Ever since, any time I'm struggling in my spirit, I'm able to speak in tongues — praying and petitioning from my heart, saying the things I'm unable to express cognitively. It has been emotionally healing for me.

I was at a Blueprint Camp a few years ago. During worship one night, I felt the Holy Spirit fall

on me and there were people around me speaking and praying in tongues. In that moment, the words seemed to come alive. Colours, pictures and words flashed across my mind as I focused on them.

I didn't know at the time what it was, until someone gave a word of knowledge. They said that God was giving someone the gift of interpretation. I knew in my heart what had happened. Through this gift, I have been able to bless many people by sharing the images, words and colours that come from their tongues — to build up and bring glory to the Body of Christ.

— *Aleisha King*

QUESTIONS

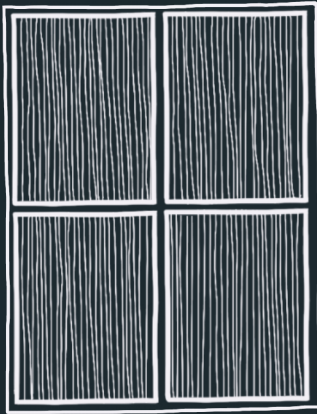
01 Is the gift of Tongues something you have seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the scripture where this gift was transformational for people?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

WEEK FIVE | 5 JULY 2020

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS



———— 1 Corinthians 12:10 ————

To others he gives the ability to tell the
spirits apart...

*A definition: This person is able to sense or see what
is happening in the spiritual realm, and to bring
understanding to the Church.*

REFLECTIONS

I had never heard the term ‘discerning spirits’ until a priest mentioned it off-handedly to me while blessing my new flat. I later learned that those two words are how the church describes people who are able to perceive parts of the world I’d taken as wrote.

The ability to sense spirits, energy, ‘vibes’, or however else you name the chilling feeling that runs down your spine if you’re in the wrong place at the right time, is something that runs in my family. Sometimes it comes with sights or sounds. Sometimes it’s just a feeling and the certain knowledge that something dark, or even holy, is present.

While my parents were Christian, this gift (among other things) drove a wedge between them and their local church communities. As a result, I grew up without a framework for understanding

what we all saw, felt, and heard — and it made me very afraid.

There isn’t a lot of room in modern Aotearoa for the spiritual realm, and people who are sensitive to it — either inside or outside of the church. It was easy to feel that this experience was inherently wrong, deluded, and even demonic. By the time I’d hit my twenties I’d certainly encountered many spiritual beings, both physically before my eyes and as a sensation. But it was an encounter with the risen Christ that brought me understanding and acceptance of my gift.

Jesus promises us that the captives will be set free and the blind will see again. I have faith that through the power of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God Almighty that those suffering under spiritual oppression will

REFLECTIONS

be released into freedom, and those who are blind to the world of spirits will be given eyes to see. In the meantime, those of us who know those gifts

are called to guide others into freedom through God.

— *Charlotte Dawson*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the gift of discerning spirits something you’ve seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

THE APOSTLE



———— Ephesians 4:11-12 ————

So Christ himself gave the gift of the apostles to the church. He gave the prophets and those who preach the good news. And he also gave the pastors and teachers as a gift to the church. He gave all these people so that they might prepare God's people to serve. Then the body of Christ will be built up.”

This week we move from looking at specific spiritual gifts as mentioned in 1Corinthians 12, to looking at the roles God blesses people with in Ephesians 4. These are sometimes called ‘The Five-fold Ministry’. These roles are Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers and Pastors. This week we look at the role of the Apostle.

A definition: The role of the Apostle is to create an environment where the other gifts can grow and the Church can thrive.

REFLECTIONS

When I was younger, I would spend a lot of time dreaming of schemes to get my friends involved in. I would imagine new groups we could start, events we could plan, and projects we could do together. After a while, I began to realise that I didn't so much care about the event, the sport or the thing we were creating — what I drew energy from was bringing people together in new ways that made them excited and drew out their unique skills and talents.

As I have grown older, God has spoken to me and revealed this as the Apostolic gifting. I used to believe leadership was about always being the best at everything. Over time, I have seen leadership as less about taking up this space, and more about creating it for others to step into. That's what the Apostolic gift is — it creates space for

others to grow. Often the Apostle steps into the shadows, while others step into the spotlight. As John said of Jesus, "He must increase, and I must decrease". (John 3:30)

Paul is the most obvious example of an Apostle in the scriptures. He didn't do everything himself, but he moved all around the early Church — setting things up and then moving on. For years afterwards he would pray for these people, send them letters, encourage them and correct them if they went off track. Most Apostles, like Paul, are strategic and concerned about the big picture of nurturing leaders to in turn grow the health of their communities.

At the moment, my Apostolic gifting is most alive in leading our Blueprint Chapter house on Cuba Street. In our house we

REFLECTIONS

have people who are prophetic, pastoral, evangelical and those who love to teach. My call as an Apostle is not to try to be the best at all of those things, but to create

a space where each person in the house is able to thrive in their unique giftings.

— *Esme Putt*

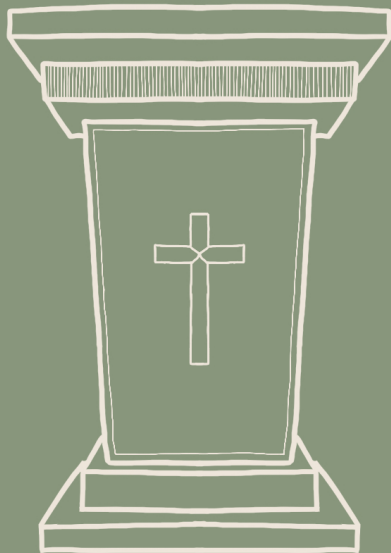
QUESTIONS

01 Is the gift of Apostolic gifting something you've seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

THE PROPHET



— Ephesians 4:11 —

“Christ gave the prophets to the church...”

A definition: The role of the Prophet is to hear God’s truth, to speak it out, and to call us to be faithful to the way of Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

To be prophetic means simply to hear God and to communicate what you hear. In 1Corinthians 14, Paul said he wished that all could prophesy — as he saw prophecy was a way to strengthen, encourage, and comfort the community of faith. While all people are called to hear God, there is also the gift of Prophecy.

I remember the first time I felt a strong compulsion to share something (a prophetic song). I was absolutely terrified; I thought my heart would beat its way out of my chest. I couldn't do it in the end and was so deeply disappointed with myself.

The following Sunday the same thing happened. The same song, the same intense panic. I still remember walking shamefully up to the microphone at the front, expecting to be told to sit

down. I was so surprised by the positive feedback that followed. Obviously people saw in me what I was unable to see in myself at the time.

A big part of the Prophetic is to call out what is unseen, and to reveal where God is at work. For example, in 1Samuel 16, the Prophet Samuel goes out into the countryside to find a new King. He identifies David, a simple and scrawny shepherd boy, and reveals to him that he has an enormous call on his life. Prophets have a way of seeing Kingdom potential that others sometimes miss in their daily lives.

The best way to sharpen the Prophetic gift is to hear from God through prayer (where you become attuned to his voice), worship (where we prepare the ground for God to speak), and the reading of the scriptures

REFLECTIONS

(where we learn to know what God's character is like). This is how I have honed the Prophetic gifting in my life.

— *Cindy Ruakere*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the Prophetic gift something you've seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

THE EVANGELIST



———— Ephesians 4:11 ————

Christ gave them those who preach good news...

A definition: The role of the Evangelist is to tell people about Jesus and lead them to faith — to share the Good News.

REFLECTIONS

I'm someone who spills over about something when I'm on the buzz about it. My enthusiasm for things means that I feel I cannot contain the energy I have for that thing — especially when it's something new I've discovered. When I've found something good, I want everyone to enjoy it, to try it, to have it.

When I first came to faith I was so excited about Jesus, and I was so, so excited about other people coming to know Jesus. That looked like inviting a lot of friends to join me at youth group and inviting my flat-mates to church when I moved to Wellington. I liked talking, and I liked talking about faith because it mattered to me. Conversations about God and life and Jesus give me energy.

Unfortunately, we live in a somewhat cynical and skeptical time. Because of this — and the

entanglement of colonial history with Evangelism and missionary work — some are skeptical about the place of Evangelism. And yet, just like he did 2,000 years ago, Jesus is continuing to send people out with good news; to tell of a God who made himself known as Jesus Christ, who came as good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed.

All of us are called to 'go and make disciples' (Matt 28:19–20), to share that there is a God who loves them, who died for them, who wants to invite them into a relationship and an adventure with him. But I think God has made me especially passionate about this. To retain that passion, I have to remember the joy I had when I came to Jesus, and keep pursuing encounters with the living God. I need to keep being

REFLECTIONS

reawakened to the good news — because, when I do, I can't help but share my life. I strive to be continually reconverted

to Jesus, and to allow my life to speak alongside the passion of my words.

— *Rose Morris*

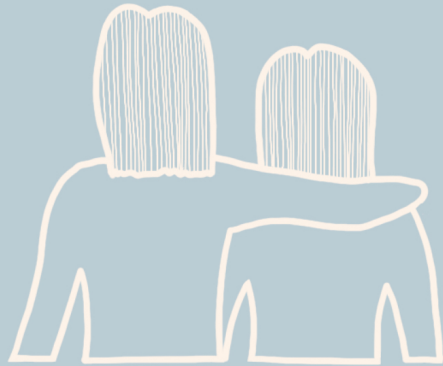
QUESTIONS

01 Is the Evangelism gift something you've seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

THE PASTOR



———— Ephesians 4:12 ————

“Christ gave the pastors to the church...”

A definition: The role of the Pastor is to care for God’s people by holding them in prayer and nurturing their growth.

REFLECTIONS

For me, inviting and including people, remembering birthdays, and celebrating people well brings me deep joy. People say I am pastoral.

A lot of this is my personality, however the Pastoral gift is not the same as just being caring or empathetic. It is about others finding healing, wholeness, and knowing God's love deeply for themselves. If I want to see someone I love find freedom — to journey through difficult circumstances, and find the strength and healing of Jesus — then I am going to need more than a birthday card.

I need the love of Jesus, just as much as the person I am caring for. The self-giving love of Jesus is what overflows when I invite people into my home for a meal, or to have them stay with me. It prompts me to notice people and

to make space for them. Jesus was called the Good Shepherd, and the Pastoral gifting is the spirit of Christ who cared for his flock.

Jesus gave his life for people because, to him, they are priceless. When I'm steeped in Jesus' love, my actions can transform a heartfelt human interaction into an experience of God's divine and self-giving love. I can speak life and hope to someone.

I can point them to God and to scripture, and know that the promises of God are true for them. I can pray with them and for them, and know that these prayers make a difference. I need the love of Jesus to give me courageous compassion — to sit with someone in their pain and not try to fix it all myself or to rush God's work. I need the love of Jesus to be vulnerable, finding

REFLECTIONS

solidarity with Christ who is our wounded healer. This is the heart of the Pastoral gifting.

— *Cindy Newport and Lauryn Miller*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the Pastoral gift something you've seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

WEEK TEN | 2 AUGUST 2020

THE TEACHER



———— Ephesians 4:12 ————

“Christ gave teachers as a gift to the church.”

A definition: The role of the Teacher is to know God’s word and help the Church to live by it.

REFLECTIONS

The key, for me, is learning. I like learning things. I have always been fascinated by the world around me, which has led me to learn more — to learn about things. How things work and fit together; how to do things that I couldn't do before. With this has come better understanding of how I learn things. I'm no genius. To grasp new ideas, I found I had to be able to break things down into small pieces, to see patterns and make analogies.

I also found that these skills didn't always come easily to others, but I could help them along the path towards clarity. I did some work tutoring at university and later leading apprentices on the building site — passing on what I know.

At age 30, after some theological study, the opportunity arose to apply my gift to preaching. For many, this kind of public

speaking is highly intimidating, but I had never had a problem getting up on stage in front of people. Then it just becomes a task of sharing what you've learned — in this case, about God and the Bible, subjects that many find confusing. A few years on, the feedback I have often received is that my preaching has helped others to make sense of scripture, or to see it in a different way.

Jesus was called 'Rabbi' by his disciples, which means 'teacher'. For Jesus, teaching wasn't just about filling their minds with ideas, it was about provoking them towards a new way of life. There are many teachers in the world, teaching innumerable things; but when we teach in the Church, Christ is with us through the Holy Spirit. A teacher is helping to connect followers of Jesus with him and his truth.

REFLECTIONS

Sometimes this seems entirely un-miraculous, because this skill I have is ordinary to me. And yet it is an honour that I may be

allowed to use this gift to help people encounter Christ.

— *Rowan Miller*

QUESTIONS

01 Is the Teaching gift something you've seen before? How did it look?

02 Can you think of examples in the life of Jesus where this gift was active?

03 Is this a gift you think God is wanting to give to you, or to someone else you know?

